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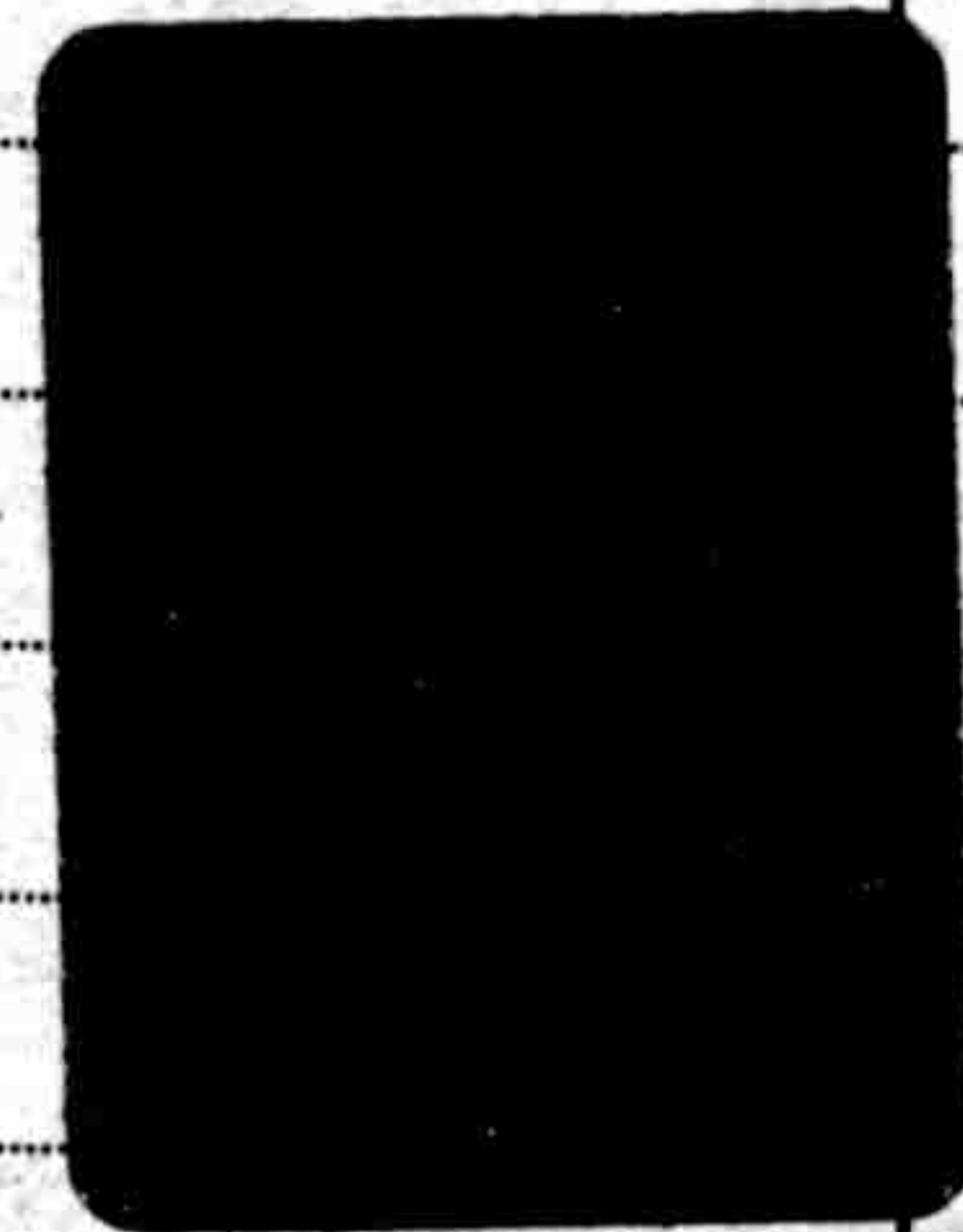
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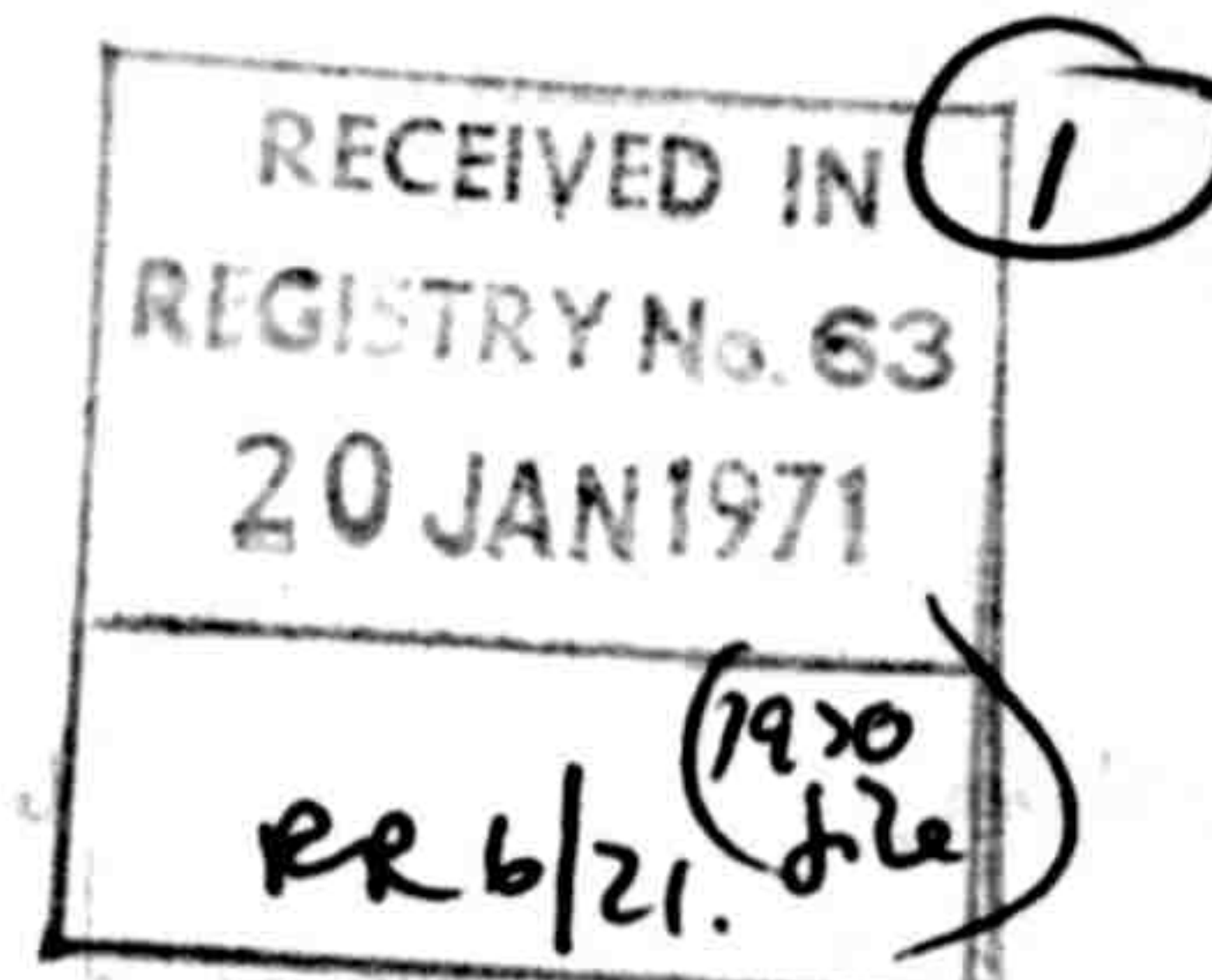
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Research Department MemorandumThe Ba'ath Party in Syria and Iraq, 1964-1970Introduction

Research Department Memoranda LR 6/13 of 1961 and LR 6/3 of 1964 traced the development of the Arab Socialist Renaissance Party (the Ba'ath) from 1958 up to the end of 1963, the year in which the party gained power in Syria and Iraq but lost it again in the latter after only nine months' rule. The present paper examines the main features of the party's development since then. In particular, it analyses the differences between the "orthodox" wing of the party - represented by the Syrian régime of 1963-1966 and by the present Iraqi régime, which has been in power since July 1968 - and the "neo-Ba'athist" group which ruled Syria from February 1966 to November 1970. The position of the new, predominantly Ba'athist, Government formed in Syria in November 1970 is also discussed.

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The Ba'ath in Syria, 1964-1970

2. After the demise of the Ba'ath in Iraq in November 1963, Syria became the focus of Ba'athist power. During 1963 the Syrian Ba'ath Party had been divided on various issues. Chief among these was the possibility of unity with the UAR, which, however, receded after an attempted Nasserist coup had been foiled in July. By the end of the year General Amin al Hafiz had emerged as the most powerful figure in the ruling group, thanks less to sponsorship within the party than to the support of the army, many officers of which were not party members. He showed himself gifted at conciliation and manipulation of the conflicting factions among the civilians and the military alike.

3. By 1965, however, a split had appeared within the party between the moderate, or "orthodox", Ba'athists and a group of extremists,

/or



or "neo-Ba'athists". The moderates were represented by Hafiz himself, Michel Aflaq and Salah al Din Bitar, the two founders of the party, and Dr. Munif al Razzaz, a Jordanian who succeeded Aflaq as Secretary-General of the International Ba'ath Party in <sup>1965</sup> ~~that year~~. The neo-Ba'athists were led by General Salah al Jadid, who as Chief of Staff had the support of the bulk of the army. In the autumn Hafiz, in an effort to establish the primacy of himself and the civilians over the armed forces, set up a five-man Presidential Council, of which he was both the President and the only military member. At the same time he emasculated the National Council of the Revolutionary Command, which had previously been the supreme authority, by enlarging it from 24 to 95 members, the great majority of whom were civilians. (The theoretical justification for this was that its base was broadened by the inclusion of representatives of the peasants, the trade unions, the professional classes, etc.) There followed a struggle for power between the International Command of the Ba'ath Party, sympathetic to Hafiz, and the (Syrian) Regional Command, which was dominated by Jadid. This was decided temporarily in Hafiz's favour in December, when he dissolved the Regional Command and transferred its powers to the International Command. But in February 1966 Jadid's supporters launched a successful coup, as a result of which Aflaq, Bitar and Razzaz left the country and Hafiz was imprisoned. (Since 1967 he has been living in exile, mainly in Iraq.)

4. The February 1966 coup resulted in the replacement of one civilian-military Ba'athist team by another, but one in which the army were more dominant than previously and one whose outlook was substantially different from that of its predecessor. The neo-Ba'athists were younger and more radical than Hafiz and his associates. Nearly all belonged to the Alawite and Druze



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heterodox Muslim sects, which constitute less than 15 per cent of the Syrian population but, for historical reasons, have a much higher representation in the armed forces.(1) Resenting the Sunni Muslims' monopoly of power, they carried their sectarian outlook to one of the main political issues in Syria, the question of relations with the UAR. Fearing that closer ties between the two countries would result in increased Sunni domination, as had been the case during the union of 1958-1961, they regarded Hafiz's intermittent efforts at rapprochement with Nasser with the utmost suspicion, even though it does not seem to have been his intention to do more than establish a modus vivendi with him. This, as much as any other policy issue, provided the immediate motive for the coup.

5. Other differences of policy also existed between the two groups, ~~and~~ notably concerning the linked questions of socialism and relations with the Communist world. Differences had long existed within the Ba'ath Party as to the form that Arab socialism should take and the speed with which it should be implemented. The neo-Ba'athists, who were young, inexperienced politically, and, in the case of the Alawites at least, tended to regard the Sunnis as feudal oppressors, leaned heavily towards Marxism and favoured ~~more extreme~~ <sup>Left-wing</sup> policies at home and ~~the~~ <sup>further</sup> expansion of contacts with Communist countries abroad. Towards the end of Hafiz's period in ~~(1) See Research Department Memorandum: The Political Activity of the Alawites and Druzes in Syria (LR 6/48 of 1966).~~

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(1) See Research Department Memorandum: The Political Activity of the Alawites and Druzes in Syria (LR 6/48 of 1966).



office they criticised him for neglecting relations with Communist China in particular; but this seems to have been a tactical manoeuvre rather than a reflection of a real preference on their part for Chinese, as opposed to Soviet, methods.

6. After the coup several civilians were given prominent positions, including Dr. Nur al Din Atassi, who became Head of State; Dr. Yusuf Zu'ain, who became Prime Minister; and Dr. Ibrahim Makh~~us~~, who became Foreign Minister. The real power, however, lay more with the party than with the Cabinet, and more with the army and General Jadid than with the party.

7. Friction between Jadid and Major Selim Hatum, a Druze commando officer, led to the latter making an unsuccessful bid for power in September 1966. After this the <sup>dominance</sup> ~~stranglehold~~ of the Alawites ~~on~~ <sup>over</sup> the party to the exclusion of the Druzes, which had already <sup>been</sup> ~~become~~ <sup>even</sup> ~~marked~~ <sup>apparent</sup> ~~well-nigh complete~~ and was one of the causes of Hatum's discontent, became <sup>more</sup> ~~marked~~. The sectarian nature of the leadership proved from then on to be one of its strengths, since conflicts within it were ~~not allowed to~~ contained for fear of letting in outsiders.

8. During 1967 and 1968 various stresses and strains appeared within the leadership. Eventually, a power struggle developed between General Jadid and General Hafiz al Assad, the Minister of Defence, who was like Jadid, an Alawite. Jadid identified himself with the policies with which the neo-Ba'athists had come to power - radical socialism, inclining towards Marxism; close cooperation with Communist countries; isolation from the UAR. On the Palestine issue he favoured a war of words rather than action, taking the view that Syria was not strong enough to contemplate renewed hostilities with Israel. (He and his supporters were responsible for the decision to withdraw from the Golan Heights in 1967.) Assad, on



the other hand, favoured more specifically Arab policies, including the fostering of closer relations with the UAR, which would enable a more united front to be presented against Israel. He wished to reduce Syrian dependence on the USSR and, at home, had a less doctrinaire approach than Jadid to social and economic affairs.

9. Assad, as Minister of Defence, had the support of the bulk of the military. Jadid, who was Assistant Secretary-General of the Regional Command, exerted his influence through the party apparatus and through civilians such as Zu'ain and Makhaso. Through the party he also exercised control over the guerrilla organisation, al Sa'iqah, which became virtually his private army. In October 1968 Assad was able to assert himself over Jadid's faction to the extent that Zu'ain and Makhaso were dropped from the Cabinet. Thenceforward he was the dominant figure in the Syrian leadership. But he did not eliminate Jadid at this time, and did not always find it possible to push through his own policies. This was due to some extent to Soviet support for Jadid.

10. With the increase in Assad's influence, the general trend within the Syrian régime in 1969 and 1970 was towards moderation of the attitudes <sup>with</sup> which the neo-Ba'athists had begun. The mellowing experience of office may have contributed to this process. Also, once the party had held power for a comparatively long time it attracted to it many who had little real affinity with it but considered that their interests lay in joining it. Their influence, such as it was, was towards moderation. One observer noted, too, that each year was bringing into the party more young Alawite members who, on reaching adult life, were less conscious than their elders of discrimination against their sect. *The regime remained nevertheless one of the most extreme in the Middle East.* /11.



11. Whatever semblance of stability the régime enjoyed was destroyed as the result of increased strains within it at the time of the Jordan civil war and Nasser's death, in September 1970. Syria's intervention in the war was carried out at the instigation of the civilian wing of the party and was opposed by Assad. The lack of success of the operation led to recriminations and, after a period of political in-fighting, Assad carried out a bloodless coup on 13 November. Jadid and Atassi and some other members of the civilian wing were removed, and a new Provisional Regional Command was set up. From the communique issued by this body on 16 November it was evident that the new régime attached over-riding importance to improving relations with other revolutionary Arab States, ~~and~~ particularly the UAR. Having been somewhat out on a limb during her neo-Ba'athist period, Syria was thus showing a desire to return to the mainstream of Arab politics. ~~and~~ As an earnest of this, on 27 November ~~she~~ <sup>Syria</sup> acceded to the tripartite declaration <sup>on federal unity</sup> made earlier in the month by the UAR, Libya and the Sudan, ~~in which they had pledged themselves to work towards federal unity.~~ At home, the Government formed on 21 November, with Assad as both Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, contained a majority of Ba'athists but also several "Nasserists" and two Communists. The base of power was thus <sup>now for personal purposes</sup> widened, but ~~with~~ the Ba'ath retained overall control.



The Ba'ath in Iraq. 1968-1970

12. During its nine months in power in Iraq in 1963 the Ba'ath enjoyed little genuine support and was far from united. In opposition it remained disunited. By 1967 it was possible to distinguish two principal groups within it: the "Right-wing" Ba'ath, composed mainly of those who had led the party in 1963 and still associated with the International Command led by Aflaq, and a ~~Leftist~~ *Left-wing* group aligned with the neo-Ba'athists in Syria. (There was also a small extremist group led by Ali Saleh al Sa'adi, whose methods when in command of the National Guard in 1963 had done much to discredit the party.) It was the first of these, the "Right-wing" or "orthodox" Ba'ath, that came to power in July 1968. Several of the most important posts ~~went to figures who had enjoyed prominence in 1963:~~ went to figures who had enjoyed prominence in 1963: General Ahmad Hassan al Bakr, who had been Prime Minister in 1963, became President; General Hardan Abdul Ghaffar al Tikriti, Commander of the Air Force in 1963, became Minister of Defence; and General Saleh Mahdi Ammash, Minister of Defence in 1963, became Minister of Interior.

13 This régime, like the one in Syria, was a divided one. ~~Rivalry within it initially crystallised round the figures of Ammash and Tikriti.~~ At first the main rivalry within it ~~appeared to be~~ <sup>was</sup> between Ammash and Tikriti. But in April 1970 both of them were relieved of Ministerial office and appointed Vice-Presidents of the Republic, a move which marked a diminution <sup>of their</sup> ~~in the~~ influence of them and ~~the~~ <sup>that</sup> of the military <sup>wing</sup> and was a tactical victory for Saddam Hussein al Tikriti, the Secretary General of the Regional Command of the Ba'ath Party, a doctrinaire young Ba'athist who had by then gathered much power into his hands through the party apparatus. In the latter half of 1970 Ammash ~~managed to re-establish~~ his authority to some extent, but Hardan Tikriti was dismissed from office in October. His demise was precipitated by a crisis in the leadership ~~over the~~ <sup>over the</sup> question of whether Iraqi troops should intervene in the Jordan civil war, but ~~it was also~~ <sup>was</sup> the result of a long-standing grievance against him on the part of civilian Ba'athists for his part in easing the party out of power in 1963. In Iraq, therefore, as in Syria, the Jordan civil war brought to a head <sup>by</sup> long-standing differences within the leadership, though with less far-reaching consequences.

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Ba'athist Policies in Syria and Iraq

14. Examination of the policies pursued by the Ba'ath<sup>ist</sup> régimes in Syria and Iraq ~~for between 1966 and 1970~~ indicates that the differences which had existed between the orthodox and neo-Ba'athist wings of the party in Syria in 1965 became ~~less~~ less clear-cut during the time when the neo-Ba'athists were in power. It suggests also that the differences between the two wings of the party in Baghdad and Damascus during the period July 1968-November 1970 were more regional than ideological in substance.

15. The neo-Ba'athists' first actions when in power did indeed have an extremist air about them. The Syrian Cabinet formed in March 1966 included two members who were known for their Communist sympathies as well as Zu'ain and Makhlis, who at least had leanings towards Marxism. Khalid al Jundi, President of the Syrian Federation of Trade Unions, who was an avowed Marxist, was allowed to build up a workers' militia for purging State institutions on the lines of the Chinese Red Guard, and his cousin, Colonel Abdul Karim al Jundi, became associated with equally extreme measures as head of the security services. The Government rescinded a decree banning Communists from the civil service and re-instated a number of them. In April the veteran Syrian Communist, Khalid Bikdash, returned to Damascus after an almost continuous eight-year exile. Ties with Communist countries were strengthened: the Soviet Union announced its decision to finance the Euphrates Dam in April 1966 after Zu'ain had visited Moscow; diplomatic relations with North Viet-Nam and North Korea were established in July. Relations with the West deteriorated and, as the result of a dispute between the Syrian Government and the Iraq Petroleum Company, the flow of oil from Iraq to the Mediterranean was interrupted from December 1966 to March 1967.

16. The coming <sup>to power</sup> of the neo-Ba'athists thus marked a swing to the Left in Syria. But whether it was a decisive swing is open to question. Hafiz's régime had already, in 1965, undertaken sweeping measures of nationalisation. These measures had marked a milestone on the path of Moscow's gradual acceptance of the Ba'ath as an ally in the Middle East and, whereas the advent of the neo-Ba'ath provided the impetus to reach another milestone - the Euphrates Dam agreement - in a sense this only put the finishing touches to a process begun long before. (The plans for the dam were being studied in Moscow as early as 1963.) Within Syria, the Ba'ath began to have dealings with individual Communists, but not with the Communist Party as such. Bikdash's return proved an anti-climax and little was heard of him afterwards.



in Syria. Khalid al Jundi's militia <sup>was</sup> disbanded in August 1967 and his cousin, Abdul Karim, <sup>(apparently)</sup> committed suicide in March 1969. By this time the influence of the extremist elements in the régime had been diluted, Zu'ain and Makhs had been relieved of office, and Assad's star was in the ascendant. He was, as previously indicated, either unable or unwilling to eliminate Jadid's faction completely at that time, and it continued to have influence. But from 1969 onwards there was little to distinguish the régime's policies from those which might have been followed by its predecessor. By August 1970, indeed, the wheel had turned full enough circle for a Soviet newspaper to be complaining of the persecution of Communists in Syria. And as for Sino-Syrian relations, they did not wax appreciably despite the pro-Chinese posture previously adopted by the neo-Ba'athists.

17. The policies pursued by the "orthodox" Ba'ath in Iraq <sup>for July</sup> 1968 onwards differed in some <sup>ways</sup> respects from those pursued by the neo-Ba'athists in Syria, but the broad picture <sup>in one respect was</sup> became much the same - that of a non-Communist Government uneasily increasing its dependence on the USSR for reasons of expediency. Communists were given less freedom in Iraq than in Syria. The idea of forming a National Front, though often canvassed, was never put into practice because in Iraq, as in Syria, the Ba'ath were determined to prevent other parties sharing significantly in their power. <sup>(The inclusion of a few non-Ba'athist Kurdish ministers in the Cabinet since April 1970 has been for purely presentational reasons.)</sup> ~~(Since late 1969, however, the Iraq Cabinet has contained one member who is a noted fellow traveller.)~~

Iraq, like Syria, became almost completely dependent on Communist countries for arms supplies and negotiated substantial aid agreements with them - including East Germany, to whom she granted diplomatic recognition in April 1969. Like Syria, too, she remained neutral in the Sino-Soviet dispute but gave lower priority to her relations with China than to those with the Soviet Union.



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18. On another important policy issue—relations with the UAR—the positions adopted by the opposing factions within the party prior to 1966 were almost reversed when they were in power: the neo-Baathists, who had previously been opposed to close relations with the UAR régime, <sup>came to adopt</sup> adopted a fairly conciliatory attitude towards it, while the Iraqi Baath, which claimed to be the orthodox wing of the party, pursued a policy of isolation from the UAR and other Arab States despite the party's theoretical commitment to Pan-Arabism.



~~which claim to be "orthodox" wing of the party, in fact pursued a policy of isolation from the UAR despite a formal commitment to Pan-Arabism.~~

18. On another important policy issue - relations with the UAR - the positions adopted by the opposing factions within the party prior to 1966 <sup>became</sup> were almost reversed when they <sup>were in</sup> came to power. ~~The neo-Ba'athists, who had previously been opposed to close relations, will now adopt a fairly conciliatory attitude to the UAR.~~

19. Before they came to power, the neo-Ba'athists, narrow in outlook and resenting Sunni domination, had been opposed to close ties with the UAR. While paying lip-service to the same Pan-Arab dogmas as the orthodox Ba'athists, they seemed bent on pursuing their vision of Ba'athism within Syria regardless of what was happening elsewhere in the Arab world. Once they had come to power, however, they too came to realise the importance of enjoying some support from Cairo and avoiding complete isolation. They therefore made advances to the UAR, with the result that a defence agreement between the two countries was signed in November 1966. This opened up the possibility of Nasser acting as a restraining influence on the Syrian military, <sup>though it</sup> ~~but~~ was not sufficient ~~in the event~~ to prevent them from harassing Israel with guerrilla raids and artillery bombardment <sup>contributing to</sup> ~~bringing on~~ the crisis which led to the six-day war in June 1967.

20. Despite the defence agreement, there was little real warmth in Syrian-UAR relations in 1966 and 1967. With the growth of Assad's influence, however, from 1968 onwards a more genuine desire on Syria's part to improve her relations with Nasser became <sup>apparent</sup> ~~manifest~~ and some individuals with Nasserist sympathies were given positions of responsibility <sup>within Syria</sup> as a result. At the same time, Egyptian influence on Syria's foreign policies became more obvious. Pressure from Cairo was instrumental in bringing an end to the crisis in Syrian-Lebanese relations over the guerrilla question in 1969, and the restrained nature of Syria's opposition to the American peace initiative in ~~July~~ <sup>July</sup> 1970 was equally a by-product of her desire not to step too far out of line with the UAR. ~~(The irresolute nature of Syrian intervention on the side of the guerrillas in the Jordan civil war two months later may be explained partly by the same considerations.)~~ In summary, the neo-Ba'athist Government, though more extreme in outlook than Nasser, tried not to stand too openly in opposition to him in Arab affairs.



21. For the orthodox wing of the party - its founders and the Syrian leaders of 1963-1966 - the question of relations with the UAR had long been a vexing one. Although they saw no real possibility of coming to terms with Nasser after the failure of the Syrian-Egyptian union of 1958-1961 and the abortive attempt at unity between the Ba'athist régimes and the UAR in 1963, for them the Ba'athist revolution was meaningless if deprived of its international content. This was the attitude that distinguished the International Command from the Syrian Regional Command in 1965.

~~22.~~ 22. Any truly orthodox Ba'athist régime might therefore have been expected at least to keep its lines open with Nasser, as Hafiz had done. But the régime established in Iraq in July 1968 more or less turned its back on him instead: leaving to the International Command the exegesis of Pan-Arab ideology, it pursued a narrowly independent policy in Arab affairs and <sup>to protect its internal position,</sup> took measures against Nasserists in Iraq. Relations between the two countries became severely strained in 1970 when, with Iraq's condemnation of Nasser's acceptance of the American peace initiative, a bitter propaganda war broke out between them. After Nasser's death Iraq-UAR relations remained clouded and the Iraqi Ba'ath continued in isolation, having allowed other interests to come before <sup>those</sup> ~~the~~ interests of Pan-Arab solidarity.

~~The relevant issues. The Ba'ath (a) hinged on independent line policy rejecting Nasser's "Arabism" (b) represented "Nationalism" as they were a power in their own right & threatened the Ba'ath's position in Iraq. There is a not necessary any connection between these two strands of policy.~~



Relations between the Ba'ath in Syria and Iraq

23. Relations between the Ba'ath in Syria and Iraq have been strained, both because they have represented different tendencies within the party and because of national rivalry. The neo-Ba'athists used to refer to the Iraqis as a "Rightist clique" and to accuse them of collusion with the forces of imperialism and Zionism; the Iraqis dismissed the neo-Ba'athists as "militarists". The presence of the deposed Syrian President, Hafiz, in exile in Iraq (from 1967 onwards) ~~was an added source of friction. A striking example of the effect of the rivalry between the two groups was afforded~~ by Iraq's attitude towards the Egyptian peace initiative in the Lebanese crisis in 1969: Though basically unsympathetic to the Lebanese Government, Iraq took this as an opportunity to isolate Syria and backed the initiative, which effectively closed the door on Syrian intervention in the Lebanon.

24. The furthest the two countries have gone towards cooperation was an agreement on the stationing of Iraqi troops in Syria as part of the Eastern Command in 1969. But their presence caused misgivings among some Syrians and gave rise to a dispute as to who should command them.

25. The ousting of the neo-Ba'athists from the Syrian Government in November 1970 held out the prospect of some improvement of relations between the two countries. But Iraq's immediate reaction was non-committal and Syria has shown herself more interested in cementing her relations with the UAR than in putting relations with her sister Ba'ath régime on a more friendly footing.

Since July 1968 a prominent feature of the foreign policies of ~~both~~ Syria and Iraq has been the desire <sup>of each</sup> to isolate the other. A striking example of this was afforded



The International Command

26. The International Command of the Ba'ath Party, in theory the highest authority in the party's hierarchy, has seen various changes of location and composition during the period under review. After the neo-Ba'athist coup in 1966 it was estranged from the Syrian regime and in August 1968, after the Ba'ath had returned to power in Iraq, it transferred its headquarters from Beirut to Baghdad. (The Syrian régime had meanwhile set up its own, rival, "International Command".)

27. The International Command has been active in Iraq in various ways, including training party cadres from other Arab States. The Iraqi leaders have seen advantage in playing along with it because of the sense of legitimacy that it confers to their régime, but they have little affinity with <sup>such a</sup> ~~such a~~ body led by a group of French-educated Levantine intellectuals. Nor is the International Command's approval of the Iraq régime by any means complete: Aflaq himself, who was re-elected Secretary-General of the International Command in 1968, and again in 1970, deplores the arbitrary nature of the régimes in Iraq and Syria alike and has been openly critical of their policies.

28. The corruption of Ba'athism in the rough and tumble of its association with ~~the~~ Syrian and Iraqi <sup>soldier politicians</sup> ~~military~~, which has transformed a Pan-Arab movement pledged to building a socialist revolution on a popular basis into two regional dictatorships - <sup>a crime similar to that</sup> ~~the very~~ crime of which the Ba'ath used to accuse Nasser - has indeed confronted the party theorists with intractable problems. The Tenth Congress of the International Command, held early in 1970, acknowledged the difficulty by declaring that political realities necessitated that party ideology be implemented in stages. But it gave no clear directive as to what it considered these stages should be. The Iraq régime, like the Syrian, has dealt with the problem by ad hoc implementation of party doctrine as and when feasible; whereas the International Command is concerned with enhancing the prestige of the orthodox Ba'ath movement by the implementation of Ba'athist theory, the Ba'athist régimes are inevitably concerned first and foremost with the exercise of power. An example of the discord which these different attitudes can engender was provided by Iraq's decision not to commit herself to intervention on the guerrillas' side in the Jordan civil war and Aflaq's

/Aflaq's



Aflaq's vehement criticism of them for this. Although there had previously been other disagreements, on such questions as the Kurdish problem and collaboration with Communists, this one, being on an Arab national issue, touched a more sensitive spot and led to a rupture of relations between the International ~~Command~~ <sup>Command</sup> and the Iraqi Ba'ath. The quarrel has so far not been patched up and has reportedly led to widespread defections from the "Right-wing" Ba'ath in Jordan and the Lebanon.

#### Regional Branches of the Ba'ath Party

29. The Ba'ath Party has regional organisations in most other Arab countries - the Lebanon, Jordan, Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Libya, Algeria, etc. Their membership is in most cases small, and ~~nowhere~~ do they appear to represent an immediate threat to the existing régime. The many disputes within the party have had a <sup>and demoralizing</sup> confusing effect on the regional branches, which ~~tend to~~ regard the establishments in Baghdad and Damascus with suspicion and look more towards the International Command. The Iraqis have been more active than the Syrians in spreading their influence, particularly in the Persian Gulf, which they regard as their special hunting ground. Their claim to be a "legitimate" Ba'athist régime and the backing given to them by the International Command has given them some advantage in this respect. If the rupture with the International Command is permanent, they will lose this advantage.



The Ba'ath Regimes and the West

30. The Ba'ath's policies have generally been detrimental to Western interests. Diplomatic relations between HMG and Iraq, which had been severed at the time of the six-day war, were re-established in May 1968, shortly before the Ba'ath returned to power there. Although modest progress has since been made in the commercial and cultural fields, on oil, the most sensitive issue, ~~practically~~ very little has been achieved. The Ba'ath, despite its theoretical commitment to the expropriation of foreign oil concerns, has not taken things any further than the expropriation law introduced by Qasim in 1961, which limited the activities of the Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC) to areas under production and thus deprived ~~them~~<sup>it</sup> of the major part of its concessionary areas. But, despite indications that some leading figures in the regime wish to reach agreement with the IPC over differences which have built up since that law was passed, contacts have so far borne little fruit.

31. Relations between HMG and Syria have remained severed since 1967. The neo-Ba'ath followed a tougher line than the Iraqis on oil questions, as on most others. After negotiations between Syria and the IPC on the question of increased transit dues had broken down in December 1966, they stopped the flow of oil through the company's pipeline to the Mediterranean until March 1967, when a new agreement was reached. The pipeline's operations were again disrupted at the time of the June war - this time as the result of action taken by the (non-Ba'athist) Iraq Government, acting in the knowledge that if it did not interrupt supplies to the West the Syrians would. Finally, when Tapline, the pipeline from Saudi Arabia to the Lebanese port of Sidon, was damaged in May 1970, the Syrian Government refused to allow repairs to be carried out to it. The new Government, however, agreed in December that talks should be held with a view to re-opening it.



Conclusions

32. In mid-1970 the Ba'ath Party presented a picture of two faction-ridden, <sup>u</sup>qasi-military régimes, divided from each other by national and other differences; rival "International Commands" - the old command led by Aflaq lending some theoretical backing to the Iraq régime and receiving a subsidy from it but having little affinity with it, the other little more than a creation of the Syrian régime itself; and a number of weak subversive groups in other countries, possessing differing inclinations and loyalties but on the whole looking more to the "orthodox" International Command than elsewhere.

33. In the second half of the year, a time of crisis in the Middle East, the party itself went through several crises. In Syria the neo-Ba'athist group was ousted by a less doctrinaire Ba'athist group. In Iraq one prominent figure was expelled from the régime, and relations between the Iraq Regional Command and the International Command became severely strained.

34. ~~xx~~ The many divisions which have taken place within the party during the period under review have been caused in part by ideological disagreements, but to a greater extent by personal, ~~xx~~ factional, sectarian and regional rivalries. That the rift between the two wings of the party in Syria and Iraq when the neo-Ba'ath were in power was not the result of ideological differences alone seems to have been confirmed by the fact that relations ~~between the two countries~~ <sup>did not improve immediately</sup> ~~grew little warmer~~ after the neo-Ba'ath had gone.

35. Because of the complexities and inconsistencies of Ba'athist politics, such terms as "Left-wing" and "Right-wing", "extreme" and "moderate", are of limited value when applied to them, and can be misleading. (They have, however, been used in this memorandum for want of more appropriate terms.)

36. A major difficulty faced by the Ba'ath when in power has been the impossibility of its remaining there without the support of the army. The pattern of the party's relations with the officer class in Syria and Iraq is a tangled one, but it is evident that in both countries Ba'athist régimes have tended, all other divisions apart, to separate ~~them~~

/into



into civilian and military factions. In Iraq since July 1968 an uneasy alliance has been maintained between the two without a major convulsion and with the civilian wing <sup>now perhaps</sup> ~~if anything~~ predominant, but in Syria in both February 1966 and November 1970 the military faction ousted the civilian. As a result of the Ba'ath's dependence on the military, power in both countries has been exercised by what is not far removed from military dictatorship and the social-democratic part of the <sup>party's</sup> ~~Ba'ath's~~ programme has never looked like being implemented.

37. Another difficulty for the Ba'ath was, until quite recently, the impossibility of its coming to terms with Nasser. This took from under its feet the other main plank of its platform: Pan-Arabism. ~~While never abandoning its theoretical commitment to Pan-Arab revolution, the party had little room for action in this field as long as Nasser was dominating the Arab scene.~~ Now that both ~~Nasser~~ and the neo-Ba'ath have gone, Syria is seeking a closer accord with the UAR and certain other Arab States. ~~Similarly, since his death the propaganda war between Baghdad and Cairo has abated.~~ But the basic ambivalence in <sup>her</sup> Syria's attitude to the UAR is likely to persist, ~~as is the even greater lack of accord between the UAR and Iraq.~~ <sup>and Iraq-UAR relations remain clouded.</sup>

38. Although there has been a great gap between the theory and practice of Ba'athism and the party has become extremely disunited, it has nevertheless made its mark on the Middle East scene. Firstly, its organisation and determination have helped to place regimes in power in Syria and Iraq and keep them there. ~~(Such is the strength of its organisation now that it would be an act of courage for any group to assume power without the party label.)~~ Secondly, the doctrinaire element in the Ba'athist regimes' make-up has imparted a greater rigidity to their attitudes than might otherwise have existed. This has shown itself ~~xxx~~ equally in their policies towards Palestine, towards other Arab States, and towards the West. ~~Bxkxkxkx~~ The Ba'ath's presence in the Middle East has thus served to heighten the tensions already existing there.

39. With the ~~demise~~ demise of the neo-Ba'athists in November 1970 and the introduction into the Syrian Government of a wider range of non-Ba'athist opinion, it appeared that Syria intended to adopt a more flexible approach to her problems. She has already joined the <sup>embryo</sup> ~~loose~~ federation of the UAR, Libya and the Sudan and this has led

/to



to speculation that she might associate herself with any further efforts ~~in~~ made by the UAR to seek a peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israel dispute. In public statements, however, Assad has continued to reject the idea.

*Soviet influence in Syria and Iraq has increased while they have been under Ba'athist rule.*  
 40. ~~One result of Ba'athist rule in the Middle East has been the strengthening of the Soviet Union's position there.~~ The Ba'ath-Soviet relationship has not been without its strains, notably over the key questions of the Arab confrontation <sup>of</sup> with Israel and the supply of Soviet arms for this purpose. (It is the Arab-Israel dispute that has given the Soviet Union the opportunity to expand its influence in the Arab world to its present extent, but Soviet arms deliveries have often not kept pace with Arab demands.) There have also been marked differences of opinion within the Ba'ath regimes as to how far the relationship should be allowed to go; this was one of the issues which led to the neo-Ba'athists' downfall. Although a tactical alliance with the Soviet Union may suit the Ba'ath, they can be expected to continue to retain a degree of independence from Soviet policies and to keep a rein on the activities of the local Communist parties.

41. The Ba'ath's rule has generally been detrimental to Western interests in the Middle East. Neither in Iraq nor in Syria has the party fulfilled its theoretical commitment to nationalise foreign oil concerns, but ~~in~~ both countries have been difficult to deal with <sup>on oil matters</sup>. The fall of the neo-Ba'ath has brought to power in Syria a Ba'athist group which may prove less difficult to deal with than its predecessor; ~~this increases the likelihood of Tipline being reopened.~~  
~~that Tipline may be reopened.~~  
 it has already agreed to ~~reopen Tipline~~ hold talks with a view to re-opening ~~the~~ Tipline.

P. 39 ~~of~~ Your last sentence is surely contentious. Whether 'revolutionary' regimes led on in power in Iraq/Syria to remain united to meet likely ~~external~~ <sup>external</sup> ~~national~~ <sup>national</sup> ~~action~~ <sup>action</sup> of influence (e.g. on with the UAR under Nasser) Your comment: ~~likelihood is near to~~ mark.



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Reference.....

W/1

LAST PAPER

Oil Department (Mr. Tunnell)

Oil in Iraq and Syria

The attached two paragraphs are part of a draft memorandum being prepared on the Ba'ath Party in Syria and Iraq. I should be grateful for any comments you may have on them.

C. J. S. Rundle

(C. J. S. RUNDLE)

Research Dept.

Room 716, Riverwalk House

22 December 1970

Mr Rundle  
Research Dept

This is fine.

A. M. Hume  
23/12

dr

23/12

Confidential



Confidential

Reference.....

W/1

Mr. Hinchcliffe (Near Eastern Department)

The Ba'ath Party in Syria and Iraq

Owing to pressure on our typing facilities I shall not be able to get the attached rough draft typed up for several days. Would you mind reading it as it is and letting me have your comments in due course?

cc Rundle

(C.T.S. RUNDLE)

M. E. Section,  
Research Dept.

17 December 1970

Mr Rundle, Research Dept

I think that this is a very good paper. I have made a minor correction - two (last 2 lines of Para 11 & 12) as per below comments:-

(a) Para 12. What is your basis for describing the "Right wing" Ba'ath as "Orthodox" such as the "left wing" which can be better described in this way. However labelling is dangerous as to "Rt. wing" Ba'ath in Iraq is itself

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1970 file.  
PR 621

[Discussed. This is the normal terminology. CR]



split between the "orthodox" doctrine  
Baathists (e.g. Saddam & Talat) and  
the more moderate / offshoot Baathists such  
as Ali Banna himself. (However you  
had this well in Para 34)

✓ Para 13 See marginal comment

✓ Para 14 Hits the nail long on the head.

✓ Para 16 You ~~referred~~ <sup>I have</sup> made the point that

Abdul Karim al Jundi "meets" may  
not have been what it seemed.

✓ Para 17 Perhaps you should mention (until  
~~the~~ April 1970) that there has been a few non-Baathist  
Kurdish ministers (<sup>the</sup> ~~not~~ in the RCC) for  
humanitarian reasons.

✓ Para 18 Perhaps you should stand <sup>(or conclude) the</sup> ~~to~~  
make clear (without reference back to  
~~the pages~~ ~~exactly what you mean by~~  
~~the rather cryptic remark~~ (I know what  
you mean but thousands wouldn't!) I see  
that it is an introduction to paras 19-23  
but it is not clear as I would be misled  
that it could be secret completely

✓ Para 20 Point in my brackets in line 12. I  
do not think that this was a factor  
in Syrian ultimate intervention in Jordan.  
Syria was "unwilling" because / (a)



- (a) The Russian 201st Br  
 (b) He was looking over the shoulder  
 toward Israel  
 (c) He feared military intervention by the  
 USA. (I know that the Russian told  
 her that if she pressed on with her  
 attack the Americans would use this  
 as an excuse for intervention)

✓ Para 22 See marginal comment.

✓ Para 23-25. It seems to me that  
 the comments of both Iraqi & Syrian  
 foreign ministers since July 1968 is  
 to derive by both <sup>me</sup> to violate the  
 other.

✓ Para 30 I must attach copy with this.  
 Contacts between IPC and the Baathists have  
 been more ~~subtle~~ <sup>subtle</sup> than you suggest. Please  
 check this para with Oil Dept.

✓ Para 32. Marginal Comment.

✓ Para 35 Iraq is getting around this



deflected by hinges in the arms &  
by the infiltration of Ba'athists into  
key posts in the Army. [But this is still a  
compromise with the army]

P. 39 Marginal note.

P. 37 I disagree with your  
view in brackets on how Iraq is  
concerned. On the contrary a regime  
with a non-Ba'athist label would  
be very humble (to begin with  
only) to the average Iraqi.  
The label "Ba'athist" stinks. I don't  
think that the Syrians give a damn one way  
or the other.

Sorry if these remarks offend. But  
your view is very good considering the  
situation deflected by the subject matter!

PM Humble

19/12



Research Department Memorandum, 'The Ba'ath Party In Syria And Iraq, 1964-1970'; Ba'athist Policies; International Command. The Ba'ath Party In Syria And Iraq 1964-1970. 22 Dec. 1970. MS Middle East Online: Iraq, 1914-1974: Selected files from series AIR, CAB, CO, FCO, FO, PREM, T, WO, The National Archives, Kew, UK FCO 51/153. The National Archives (Kew, United Kingdom). Archives Unbound, [link.gale.com/apps/doc/SC5107460251/GDSC?u=webdemo&sid=bookmark-GDSC&xid=299fd2d0&pg=1](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/SC5107460251/GDSC?u=webdemo&sid=bookmark-GDSC&xid=299fd2d0&pg=1). Accessed 11 Apr. 2022.